



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Delaware Forest Service provides \$15,249 to Delaware State Fire School

On March 6, Michael Valenti, Assistant State Forestry Administrator, presented a check for \$15,249 to the Delaware State Fire School. The funds will be used by the Fire School for its operating budget and to facilitate training for volunteer firefighters and state agencies to handle wildland fires and cooperative prescribed burns. The ceremony was a continuation of a more than ten year tradition of partnership with the State Fire School. The \$15,249 comes from the Delaware Forest Service's Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant provided by the U.S. Forest Service each year.

Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, Michael Scuse, said, "I am very pleased that we are able to continue our partnership with the Delaware State Fire School. We are working together to ensure the safety of our volunteer firefighters and state agency staff. Our forests, public and private, are very important to all of us and to the wildlife that live in them. This partnership will better conserve, protect, and enhance our forests."

"Director Biff Newnam of the Delaware State Fire School stated that he is pleased with the tradition of cooperation between Forestry and the Delaware State Fire School, in that for over ten years the groups have partnered to provide training to the Delaware Fire Service pertaining to wildland firefighting."

To participate in out-of-state wildland fire assignments, firefighters must follow the national standards set by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). These standards can be found at <http://www.nwcg.gov/>. The Delaware Forest Service has adopted the NWCG standards for in-state prescribed burns and wildland fires. This annual funding gives the Fire School an opportunity to work with the Delaware Forest Service to provide classes to certify volunteer firefighters and state agency personnel as basic wildland firefighters (Firefighter Type II (FFT2)).

In January and February of this year, fifty-four individuals completed all of the basic classes (taught by Delaware Forest Service personnel) and became nationally certified as basic wildland firefighters. Forty were volunteer firemen and fourteen were Delaware State Parks' personnel. Rob Line, DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation's Natural Heritage Program Manager, said, "This is an excellent partnership. The partnership and the funding provided to the Fire School by the Delaware Forest Service gives the State Parks staff an opportunity to support Forestry's mission and in return garner Forestry's support to better protect State Park's forestry resources."

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“According to Michael Valenti, Assistant State Forestry Administrator, the basic classes will be repeated this month. Valenti said, “By the end of March, we should have nearly 60 state employees (DDA and DNREC) who are qualified to safely participate in cooperative prescribed burns on state lands. We then plan to share resources (personnel and equipment) throughout the year when cooperative prescribed burns are scheduled for various management activities including wildlife habitat enhancement and hazardous fuels reduction.”

Rob Gano, DNREC’s Regional Manager for the Assawoman Wildlife Area, said “The partnership between the Delaware Forest Service and the Delaware State Fire School is important to the Division of Fish and Wildlife. It gives us an opportunity to strengthen our on-going prescribed burning program by strengthening our fire safety standards. The partnership provides a wonderful source of fire equipment, resources, and training.”

For more information on the Delaware State Fire School, contact Mike Lowe, Training Administrator:

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For more information on the Delaware Forest Service and/or the basic wildland fire training, contact Mike Valenti, Assistant State Forestry Administrator:

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Electronic version of pictures is available from anne.fitzgerald@state.de.us.

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*Left to Right:
Michael Valenti, Assistant State Forestry Administrator
Biff Newmam, Director of the Delaware State Fire School.*



Delaware Firefighters at a prescribed burn.